

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BOGOTA 01731 232127Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W  
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O 232044Z FEB 77  
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 57

S E C R E T BOGOTA 1731

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINS, ASEC, CASC, CO  
SUBJ: KIDNAPPING OF PCV: STARR

REF: STATE 39688

THERE FOLLOWS THE INFORMAL TRANSLATION FROM THE SPANISH ORIGINAL  
OF THE TEXT OF THE MESSAGE WHICH P.C. DIRECTOR GAVE TO VILLAMIL:

QUOTE TO THE REVOLUTIONARY ARMED FORCES OF COLOMBIA:

IN MY POSITION AS NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF THE PEACE CORPS IN  
COLOMBIA, AN ORGANIZATION WHOSE OBJECT IS THE VOLUNTARY ASSISTANCE  
OF DEVELOPING AREAS AND WHICH, DURING THE 15 YEARS WHICH IT HAS  
SERVED IN THIS COUNTRY, HAS BROUGHT TO COLOMBIA THOUSANDS OF  
YOUNG AMERICANS MOTIVATED BY HUMANITARIAN IDEALISM SEEKING TO  
LEND WHATEVER ASSISTANCE POSSIBLE TO ALL TYPES OF NEEDY PERSONS,  
I EARNESTLY REQUEST THAT THE MEMBERS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY ARMED  
FORCES OF COLOMBIA (FARC), IN THE NAME OF HUMAN RIGHTS, RESPECT  
THE LIFE OF OUR VOLUNTEER, MR. RICHARD CHARLES STARR, AND  
RELEASE HIM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, TO AVOID INCREASING THE  
SORROW OF HIS DEAR MOTHER, WHO IS RESIDING IN THE UNITED  
STATES AND WHO NOW FINDS HERSELF SO CONCERNED ABOUT THE  
FATE OF HER SON.

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I WOULD LIKE TO POINT OUT THAT YOUNG STARR IS BASICALLY  
A MAN ACCUSTOMED TO CITY LIVING, UNACCUSTOMED TO THE DIFFICULT  
EXISTENCE OF A GUERRILLA WHICH REQUIRES GREAT PHYSICAL  
FORTITUDE, A FACT WHICH MAKES IT ALL THE MORE DIFFICULT FOR  
HIM TO ENDURE THE FORCED MARCHES OF THE FARC MEMBERS, WHO ARE  
ACCUSTOMED TO THE HARDSHIPS OF THE JUNGLE AND THE WEATHER.  
WITH THIS BURDEN AND THE FACT THAT HE FINDS HIMSELF UNDER

INTENSE EMOTIONAL STRAIN, MR. STARR'S HEALTH, ALREADY DELICATE DUE TO SERIOUS INTERNAL PHYSICAL PROBLEMS, WILL DETERIORATE EVEN FURTHER AS HIS PHYSICAL RESISTANCE WEAKENS. FOR THESE REASONS, I ASK THAT YOU SHOW CONSIDERATION FOR OUR VOLUNTEER AND TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THIS EARNEST REQUEST.

MANY FARC MEMBERS MAY ALREADY BE AWARE OF THE FACT THAT PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS NEVER BECOME INVOLVED IN LOCAL POLITICS, RELIGION, OR OTHER ASPECTS INVOLVING THE NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY OF COLOMBIA. THESE VOLUNTEERS ASSIST THE MOST NEEDY PERSONS WITHOUT ANY PATERNALISTIC MOTIVATION. THOSE VOLUNTEERS IN THE AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM WORK TOGETHER WITH COLOMBIAN FARMERS, CULTIVATING THE LAND WITH THEIR OWN HANDS, IN ORDER TO HELP THE FARMERS TO EARN THEIR OWN LIVING THROUGH THE USE OF BETTER TECHNOLOGY. THEY ARE THEIR FRIENDS AND COMPANIONS IN DIFFICULT TIMES, RECEIVING IN RETURN, WITH GREAT SATISFACTION, AFFECTION AND GRATITUDE AS THEIR SOLE REWARD.

THE ATTITUDE OF HOSTILITY TOWARD EVERYTHING "GRINGO" IS A MISTAKE, FOR EVERY COUNTRY HAS GOOD AND BAD PEOPLE. I AM SURE THAT THE PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS BELONG TO THE GOOD. THEIR KINDNESS AND INTEREST IN AIDING COLOMBIANS HAVE BEEN DEMONSTRATED DURING 15 YEARS OF SERVICE IN THIS COUNTRY, A FACT WHICH CAN BE ATTESTED TO BY THOUSANDS OF YOUR HUMBLE COUNTRYMEN. THE VOLUNTEERS HAVE INTEGRATED THEMSELVES AS MEMBERS OF MIDDLE AND LOWER CLASS COLOMBIAN FAMILIES, LOVINGLY SHARING THEIR JOYS AND SORROWS, CERTAIN THAT THEY CAN COME TO THEIR ADOPTED COLOMBIAN BROTHERS AND FATHERS WHEN THEY ARE IN NEED OF AFFECTION AND UNDERSTANDING. IT IS TIME FOR FALSE PUBLICITY

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TO GIVE WAY TO A REAL AND DESIRABLE UNDERSTANDING.

FROM MY EXPERIENCE AS A PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND AS A STUDENT IN THE INTERPRETATION OF POLITICAL QUESTIONS, I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT HOLDING INNOCENT YOUNG RICHARD STARR AS PRISONER AND ENDANGERING HIS LIFE WILL BRING ABOUT AN UNFAVORABLE AND HOSTILE REACTION TOWARD YOUR MOVEMENT, SINCE THE PEACE CORPS, FOUNDED BY THE LATE PRESIDENT KENNEDY TO ASSIST DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, HAS THE RESPECT, AFFECTION, AND SYMPATHY OF THE STUDENTS AND FACULTIES OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES AND OF THE POWERFUL COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA.

NO LIFE SHOULD BE WASTED, FOR IT COULD SOMEDAY BE OF AID EVEN TO THOSE WHO NOW CONTROL IT. JUSTICE SHOULD BE ADMINISTERED HONESTLY, WITHOUT FANATICISM OR IN REVENGE FOR SOCIAL INEQUITIES, AND WITHOUT SACRIFICING INNOCENT PERSONS WHO HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH ANOTHER'S STRUGGLE. IF ONE WISHES TO EXTOL AN IDEAL, A CAUSE, A COMMON GOAL, ONE MUST KEEP THEM FREE FROM REPROACH.

THE PEACE CORPS IN COLOMBIA CONFIDENTLY AWAITS THE  
FREE AND JUST DECISION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE FARC AND  
TRUSTS THAT YOUNG STARR WILL SOON BE RELEASED UNHARMED.

SINCERELY

JOSE S. SORZANO  
NATIONAL DIRECTOR  
PEACE CORPS-COLOMBIA UNQUOTE  
SANCHEZ

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009